



Graffiti-



Is it all

about paints?

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INTRODUCTION

We draw as a way of thinking, learning and propagating. We draw to solve problems, to communicate in various fields, to express ourselves emotionally as well as socially. We also intend to spread our ideas and perspectives through drawing. Graffiti, which is a set of images, expressions, and symbols drawn unconsciously or with full mind, is such a form of art.

It is a way of making a mark on something to make it clear that we were there and we were prepared to make a mark. For some it constitutes an achievement, for some it imparts information or warning while for some it simply displays the artistic skills. Though graffiti first emerged as crime and not art. In the late 1960s, kids and young adults of New York City and Philadelphia began spray-canning their names on other people's walls without permission which was crime.

So what makes this 'crime' important? The practice of writing on the walls is universal and centuries old art starting from cave paintings. Graffiti was looked down upon but now is being looked at as an expression of the culture we live in. Political commentary, social statements, a way for people to express themselves, just like a more traditional artist would. It also often comes from people in disenfranchised communities, giving them the voice they did not always have.

Through graffiti, which are sometimes not done intentionally; reflect the status of mind and the thought process of a person.

Nowadays, graffiti are being used in advertising campaigns, in traditional artwork, in computer graphics, even as designs on clothing. In fact, a number of designers have said they find graffiti so inspirational; they even design their clothing lines around it.

Some graffiti artists have become so famous that they are now producing work for advertising campaigns for companies like Nike, Coke and Sony. The work they produce is being included in some of the world's biggest advertising campaigns, and is pushing graffiti into the mainstream for the first time. So much so, some art schools now offer classes in graffiti art, as it is seen as something that may be useful in an art career.

PROCEDURE



Two groups were made, one was sent to Flag Staff Tower monument in Kamla Nehru Ridge and the other was sent to a monument near St. Stephen's College. Indirect Observation of the graffiti on the walls of the monument was done by the groups which were further divided into pairs. A square of side one metre was assumed on the wall and the graffiti inside that square was traced by each pair on a paper. The number of messages of different types were calculated and the data

of all the pairs were cumulated in a single table. The same pairs were then sent to the classrooms at the Department of Anthropology, D.U. Each pair occupied one table and drew a square of side 1 foot and it was divided into 25 smaller boxes of equal size. Similarly, on a plain sheet of paper, a square was drawn and it was also divided into 25 smaller boxes of equal size. With the help of a magnifying glass, the graffiti on the table was closely observed and it was traced on the paper



box by box. The number of messages of different types were counted and the data from all the pairs were cumulated in a single table. A third table was made showing the percentage of the type of messages in the graffiti on the monument walls and on classroom desks. A comparison was then drawn which was the interpretation of the third table.

FINDINGS

Based on Observation of Monument Graffiti-

- The maximum type of messages was of zigzag patterns which constitute 28.7% and least was of faunal type with a percentage of 0.68.
- Political, Religious and Anthropomorphic symbols were used very less i.e. 1.02%, 1.36% and 1.02% respectively.
- Love messages, Names and other figures were used more prominently comprising a percentage of 11.30, 15.06 and 15.75 respectively.
- Geometrical figures were seen scribbled on the walls more than landscape patterns.

Table 1- Distribution of Messages in Monument Graffiti

S.No.	Type of Message	No. of Graffiti	Percentage(%)
1	Love Messages	33	11.30
2	Floral	8	2.73
3	Faunal	2	0.68
4	Anthropomorphic	3	1.02
5	Political	3	1.02
6	Religious	4	1.36
7	Numerals	34	11.64
8	Geometrical Figures	25	8.56
9	Landscapes	6	2.05
10	Zig-Zag	84	28.76
11	Names Lines	44	15.06
12	Others	46	15.75

Based on Observation of Classroom Graffiti:

- The most drawn type of messages was zigzag pattern which was 30.52% of the total and least used was religious symbols which constituted only 0.11% of the total.
- The percentage of numerals, geometrical figures and names was higher than love messages and flora and faunal category of graffiti.

- Others type of messages was also prominent with a significant percentage of 16.9.

Table 2- Distribution of Messages in Classroom Graffiti

S.No.	Type of Message	No. of Graffiti	Percentage(%)
1	Love Messages	44	5.06
2	Floral	21	2.41
3	Faunal	10	1.15
4	Anthropomorphic	23	2.64
5	Political	3	0.34
6	Religious	1	0.11
7	Numerals	81	9.33
8	Geometrical Figures	122	14.05
9	Landscapes	16	1.84
10	Zig-Zag Lines	265	30.52
11	Names	135	15.55
12	Others	147	16.93

Comparison Between Classroom Graffiti and Monument Graffiti-

- A major difference was seen in the percentage of love messages and geometrical figures used while comparing. Love messages were more in monument graffiti whereas

geometrical figures were recorded more in classroom graffiti.

- Names and floral type of messages had very less difference.
- Political, Religious and Landscape patterns were more in case of monument graffiti whereas more of scribbling and scratching was seen in classroom graffiti.
- The zig-zag patterns have highest percentage on both the graffiti whereas the least type differs. In case of classroom graffiti, religious symbols and in monument graffiti, floral patterns have been used in very less number.

Table 3- Comparison Between Monument Graffiti and Classroom Graffiti in terms of Percentage

S.No.	Type of Message	Monument Graffiti(%)	Classroom Graffiti(%)
1	Love Messages	11.30	5.06
2	Floral	2.73	2.41
3	Faunal	0.68	1.15
4	Anthropomorphic	1.02	2.64
5	Political	1.02	0.34

6	Religious	1.36	0.11
7	Numerals	11.64	9.33
8	Geometrical Figures	8.56	14.05
9	Landscapes	2.05	1.84
10	Zig-Zag Lines	28.7	30.52
11	Names	15.75	15.55
12	Others	15.06	16.93

ANALYSIS

It was observed that the zig-zag lines were most common in both, the monument and in the classroom.

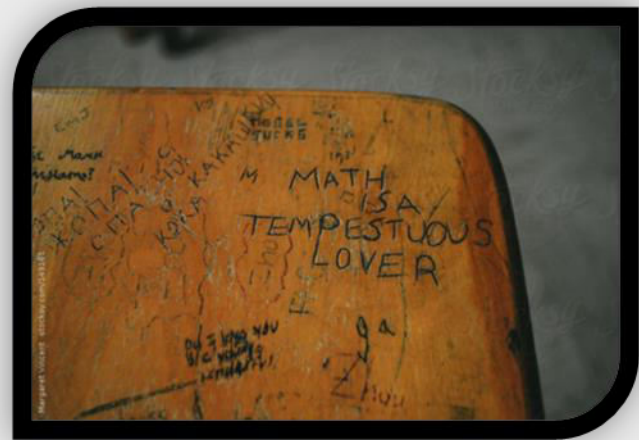


Maybe because it is the easiest to draw, the people who drew them must have been bored in the class

or would have been day dreaming, they might also be talking to their fellow mates without much interest in the conversation and perhaps would have drawn the pattern. Scratches and scribbles



reflect a confused, frustrated and fuzzy state of mind. One strong reason for anthropomorphic figures being almost double in case of classroom graffiti than monument graffiti could be that with the upcoming technology and social media, people are used to express their thoughts and emotions in the form of emotions. Name, floral and faunal designs and landscape graffiti have similar percentage in monuments and classrooms as anyone can easily draw them without any artistic effort, they are easy and quicker to draw, look much more beautiful to the eyes than the zig-zag lines, numbers, love messages etc. and come to the mind at first. At the monuments, the flora and fauna might even be drawn in an effort to copy the carvings on the monument itself, immersed in its beauty. Variation in percentage is observed in love messages,



numerals and geometrical figures in the classrooms and monuments. The numerals and geometrical figures were seen more often in the classroom as usually students do their calculation on the furniture and might even draw their diagrams on it which involved geometrical figures. While numerals and geometrical figures were observed more in the classroom, love messages were observed to a greater extent at the monuments as couples usually prefer spending their leisure time at these places which are beyond time and want to leave their imprint on the walls which will last longer than their lives. Religious symbols are observed the least both at the monuments as well as in the classrooms as while with their loved ones or in the classroom, people think the least about religion or religious symbols. The religious symbols are much more typical than the other graffiti which are usually drawn.



CONCLUSION

It's clear to conclude that graffiti work is not just a design but an art, a way of disclosing one's emotions. It helps people to portray their feelings without making it public. It is a way for people to make someday or someone memorable and unforgettable in the sand of time. Graffiti shoves off boredom and makes room for freshness and alertness. It might be as small as a part of some important calculations done on table to as large as a mass communicator conveying a message to all of them out there. Observing graffiti could be rejuvenating. It can bring out the most beautiful

and unusual designs ever seen. However, defacing the monuments is not a healthy practice which needs to be discouraged. There is a need to raise awareness through mass media about problem of graffiti in the historical monuments so that our prestigious heritage is kept safe and secure.

From the type of messages observed and analyzed, it could also be concluded that graffiti are made by the youth extensively as they are the ones who make usual visits to the monuments and historic places in their leisure time. The students' visit could be with their family, friends or cousins. The interns and working people as and when free take a day off and reboot themselves at these places. As the youth makes up a major portion of all the visitors to the



monuments, they have the largest contribution to the monument graffiti. Another important fact is that, it is mostly the youth and working that carry the tools required to scribble and draw.

Classrooms are places meant for study and perhaps it is the students, who come under today's youth, contributing the most to classroom graffiti. The young people attending lectures and classes obviously are not focusing all the time and day dream, getting bored of the classes and this is when they get actively involved in graffiti work.

If we have a closer look into the type of messages observed, the most percentage is of the love messages, geometrical figures, zig-zag lines, numerals and names. The love messages are one of the most by young couples who wish to last long. The zig-zag lines, numerals and geometrical figures are a symbol of one's absent mindedness in the lecture or in any other person's monologue. But quite notably, religious symbols which overthrow the minds of older people have been made up the least in number.

Having said that, graffiti has its own negatives, first and foremost being the shabby look of the

monuments. The cost of removal or covering graffiti is too expensive which not only adds up to the maintenance cost but the aerosols also pollute the atmosphere. The reputation and property value of the area is affected. Explicit graffiti of symbols and love notes could cause discomfort to people and offensive messages could create religious nuisance. At the classroom level the furniture gets dirty and could make it unpleasant for study purposes. Ultimately, one graffiti made is inspiration to another, giving us a vicious cycle.

Pros and cons are certain for anything and everything, but graffiti has become a widespread expression of thoughts, emotions and voices.